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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING GROUP COMMUNICATION SERVICES IN AN EXISTING COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention is a system and method for providing group communication services in an existing communication system. Group communications are enabled by installing a communications manager in a data network such as the Internet. The communications manager acts as a configurable switch, allowing communications from any group member to be transmitted to all other group members. The communications processed by the communications manager take the form of data packets, suitable for transmission over the data network. The data packets are generated by communication devices operating within the communication system. The use of the communications manager further allows users of other communication systems and devices to participate in group communications with each other.

**15 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets**

